Theo, the perfect friend, finally pulls me out, I hope, of the morass into which Bonnier had thrown me. Really! on certain days I could have packed up and left this house unfinished where my time, money, patience, and enthusiasm are being exhausted. . . . Everything is progressing better now; I don't give up hope of seeing it just about finished this autumn, before having completely ruined myself on it. I hardly know how I shall be able to pay—or at least how, after having paid, we shall be able to live.

Read Lasserre's book with the greatest interest at first, then not without irritation as it continued.[20] Is it because they stand at the beginning?—but the first chapters seemed to me by far the best The thought is not too bad, but the expression is feverish, careless. Today the desire for perfection seems merely to embarrass all those to whom it is not a joke.

Blum's book *Du Manage* is occasioning much comment. The dialogued commentary of Marcel Drouin and Fontaine, at a certain tea at the Lerolles*, struck me as far above the ordinary; a book is certainly not negligible when it makes people talk so well. But the constant, the sole avowed preoccupation with *happiness* in this book shocks me none the less. I am far from convinced that in the easiest and least costly understanding of his satisfactions man becomes most worthy of love and admiration. And what of woman!! The finest feminine figures I have known are resigned; and I cannot even imagine being charmed and not being aroused to a slight hostility by the contentment of a woman whose happiness did not involve a little resignation.

Dined *quattro giorni -fa* at R. N.'s on my way back from a visit to Maillol at Marly. Very pleasant dinner, like all the dinners at the charm-

ing R. N/s house; with a fat idiot whom I had already met through Rouart and who is named—no one knows why—Victor. His outtibrust jaw prolonged by a sort of goatee makes him look as if he had just come down from the ^Egina pediment. He grits his teeth and clenches his fists as he talks; he impresses himself as a wild man and puts frenzy into his utterance of the most stupid aphorisms. He says; "Art? It's a vice." Emits a whistle: *I, for instance, the day before yesterday I bought all at once forty Valtats: it's a vice!" He also says: "Catholicism has made of this world a vast hollow top/* He has his own ideas on religion and, after dinner, enlightens me on metaphysicis, or rather on theology. He says: "The Greeks! The Greeks!" and that is enough. At table could be heard already (but since he was speaking to the ladies, there was a shade of irony in his voice): The nature of religion . . . yes! . . . or the religion of nature . . . one or the other . . . or perhaps a bit of

[20] Pierre Lasserre's major work, *Le Romantisme frangafa,* appeared ia 1907.